

Combined force refines relief efforts

UTAPAO, Thailand – Relief efforts continue in the Southeast Asian region devastated by the Dec. 26 earthquake and resulting tsunamis.

Water-production facilities are being established in Indonesia in coordination with host government officials, said Marine Lt. Col. Robert Krieg, lead future-operations planner for Combined Support Force 536.

Five C-130 Hercules have arrived at Banda Aceh with an Air Force mobility support team to organize an airport ramp area. That is one of the critical things needed at Banda Aceh, Colonel Krieg said.

"It's a small airfield," he said. "We're trying to put a lot of supplies through there. Many nations are trying to put supplies through there."

The U.S. Navy pre-positioning ship MV Pless, with the capability to offload fresh water, is off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Operations have not begun, but the ship is standing by should the Indonesian government make such a request. The USS Duluth also arrived in the area and is ferrying supplies to shore via amphibious landing craft. *(Story by Samantha L. Quigley, American Forces Press Service)*

Commissioning program available for active-duty Airmen

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – In 2001, Second Lt. Christiane Makela was one step away from leaving the Air Force. At the time, she was a staff sergeant assigned to the 56th Civil Engineer Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

She changed her mind and traded her stripes for gold lieutenant bars via the Airman Education and Commissioning Program.

Lieutenant Makela was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC program at Arizona State University in 2004 and is now assigned to the 366th CBS at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

"It was an opportunity I couldn't afford to pass up," she said. "I was able to go to school full time and not have to worry about financial matters due to the fact that I was still receiving a regular paycheck."

The program offers active-duty enlisted Airmen the opportunity to attend college on a full-time basis, complete degree requirements and earn a commission through Air Force ROTC.

"Airmen selected for this program must pursue one of the Air Force's sought-after technical degrees and join an Air Force ROTC program," said Col. Steve Wayne, Air Force ROTC national commander.

The application deadline is March 1, and a selection board meets in April with results released in early May.

For eligibility requirements and more information, visit the base education office or go online to the military-restricted Web site at <http://afoats.maxwell.afmil>. *(Story by Staff Sgt. Calandra Battle, Air Force ROTC Public Affairs)*

Airman recovers from cancer, rejoins Air Force Band

BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, D.C. – At U.S. Air Force Band headquarters here, his locker remained just the way he left it three years ago.

Inside the locker were performance uniforms starched and pressed, ready for what could very well have been another gig at the private residence of the vice president, laundry that would have been sent to the dry cleaners the next day, a bottle of what used to be his brand of shampoo, and his favorite, though dirty, personal coffee mug.

It was a sight that provoked emotion for Master Sgt. Mitchell Morton, a pianist with the band, who, after being medically retired in August 2001, recently rejoined the band on active duty.

"It was as if (fellow band members) knew I would return one day," Sergeant Morton said with a look of discernment. "My co-workers are the best.

They tell me it became known as the 'Mitch Morton Memorial Locker.'"

He said because of the "shrine," even Airmen new to the band recognize his name. Many of them had heard the story of how one summer afternoon, during a church softball game, Sergeant Morton collided with another player and was rushed to a Maryland hospital with a mild concussion. Routine tests revealed a massive amount of blood collecting in his brain, indicating that his injuries were more serious than previously thought.

Quickly, doctors performed extensive blood tests to determine the cause, he said. The tests revealed that he had a type of blood disease – a rare form of leukemia.

Nearly three months after his initial emergency room visit, Sergeant Morton was released from the hospital to begin his new life as a civilian.

He said that at the time of his last treatment, he was, of course, feeling much better but constantly felt like there was something missing in his life.

That is, until the day he came across an article in the band's newsletter, "Cadenza," on the rebirth of Silver Wings, the band's country and western ensemble.

"I was part of the panel responsible for reviewing his case and getting the wheels in motion to bring him back," Sergeant Williams said proudly. She is the lead vocalist for the group. She and Sergeant Morton started on the same track 11 years ago and have remained close friends.

"God has a funny way of getting your attention sometimes," he said, "whether you believe in him or not." *(Story by LaDonna Boveen, 11th Wing Public Affairs)*

'Air and Space Power Journal' launches Arabic edition

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – The professional flagship publication of the Air Force, the "Air and Space Power



Photo by Senior Airman John Patis

Helicopter to the rescue

MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, Mont. – Tech. Sgt. Al Davis, 341st Operations Group, assembles a litter that can be used with a hoist mounted inside a UH-1N Huey.

Journal," is adding an Arabic version to its list of international editions in January.

The journal has been produced by the College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education here since 1949. The Arabic version will reach 22 Arabic-speaking countries.

The journal's editor, Lt. Col. Paul Berg, said the international editions are not just translations of the English version. The editors select articles they believe are most pertinent to their readers.

The January launch culminates a process that has spanned

nearly three years, Colonel Berg said, and would not have been possible without its Arabic-speaking editor, 2nd Lt. Basma Abdul-Hamid.

To view the latest edition, visit www.airpower.maxwell.afmil. *(Story by Jon Sladek, Air University Public Affairs)*